



NEWS FROM **Teamsters Joint Council 16**

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“TRASH KINGPINS OF NYC” SITE EXPOSES PRIVATE WASTE INDUSTRY RECORD OF ABUSE

(NEW YORK, New York) – A new website launched today, called [Trash Kingpins of New York City](#), exposes the corruption, racist and sexist comments, environmental damage, and labor abuses of some of New York City’s worst private sanitation companies. Many of the documents and violations on the website have never been reported on before. The website is a project of members of the Transform Don’t Trash NYC coalition.

Among the “Kingpins” featured on the website are:

- David and Gerald Antonacci of Crown Container, who frequently posted racist and sexist messages on Facebook - all while promoting their companies as uniquely sensitive to the needs of Chinese immigrant communities where they do business.
- The Bellino brothers of Liberty Ashes, who recently signed an agreement with an unaffiliated union of questionable legitimacy. The agreement undermines workers’ ability to recoup stolen wages in court, and still includes an \$8.00/hour starting wage.
- Christopher Antonacci of Crown Waste, whose company spent significant sums at casinos, steakhouses, and horse training facilities shortly before declaring bankruptcy.

Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN: Alliance for a Greater New York, said: "The private waste industry has the opportunity to provide good long-term jobs for its workers, most of whom are immigrants and people of color. Instead, it remains one of the city’s highly dangerous occupations. Owners that profit from bad equipment and cutting back on safety training need to be held accountable. It is time to transform the private waste industry to benefit the environment, workers, and communities."

Despite the industry’s past history of criminal cartels, current record of environmental degradation in low-income communities of color, and notoriously poor safety records, many of these private sanitation owners continue to operate with minimal public scrutiny. The vast majority of the hundreds of private companies licensed to haul and handle commercial waste in NYC operate as relatively secretive privately held companies, often spread among numerous LLCs and shell corporations owned by family members and partners.

In response to sweeping reforms of the New York City commercial waste industry announced last August by the de Blasio administration, a few waste industry owners are now attempting to rebrand themselves as “responsible”

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and are [spending large sums on lobbyists](#) to target the New York City Business Integrity Commission, an anti-corruption agency which regulates the trade waste industry, as well as other government decision makers to try and convince them that the industry does not need increased oversight or reform.

Melissa Iachan, Senior Staff Attorney in the Environmental Justice program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, said: “Commercial waste companies have for too long operated in the dark, avoiding accountability for violating baseline standards of labor, environmental and good business practices. It is time that our city opens its eyes to the abuses and harms these companies regularly engage in--particularly in vulnerable and overburdened communities--and holds companies accountable for those harms.”

Some of the hauling company owners most vocally opposed to reform continue to cause harm to local communities, harbor racially insensitive views toward the immigrant communities they serve, and take steps to undermine their employees’ rights by negotiating favorable deals with so-called “independent unions,” which are not affiliated with a major national union and whose members often lack the most basic of union protections.

George Miranda, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16, said: “Private sanitation was once a good-paying, safe career, but that is no longer the case, thanks to these trash kingpins and others like them. Their low-wage jobs and unsafe practices put workers at risk, and undermine the few good companies left in the industry. They can spend all the money they want on PR, but we know what is really going on.”

Trash Kingpins of New York City sheds light on the harmful behaviors of an industry that has long been shrouded in darkness. The site is based on extensive, thoroughly sourced documents including:

- Records obtained from city anti-corruption regulators;
- Public social media posts published by company owners and managers containing racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive language and imagery;
- Numerous criminal, bankruptcy, and civil court cases involving sanitation company owners and so-called “independent unions”;
- State and federal filings by “independent unions” which are said to undermine labor standards in private sanitation and other low-wage industries by cutting sweetheart deals with employers.

Angela Tovar, Director of Community Development at THE POINT CDC, said: "Environmental Justice communities like the South Bronx have long dealt with corrupt, disrespectful haulers and transfer station owners. This website shines a new light on an industry in desperate need of reform and regulation."

Jen Chanttrtanapichate of Clean Up North Brooklyn, said: "By living and working next to a private waste company, the quality of life is greatly reduced. It is increasingly difficult to breathe due to idling diesel trucks. Streets for pedestrians or fellow drivers are not safe, with trucks moving through our streets at rapid speeds. We are continually burdened by the industry’s failure to comply with laws that are created to lessen impact on communities such as ours."

Smart reforms of NYC’s waste industry, such as those being promulgated by the de Blasio administration, will not only ensure increased protections for workers and communities, but will also help the city combat climate change, and increase the City’s diversion rate to move towards its ambitious zero waste goals.

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The website is being launched by three members of the Transform Don’t Trash NYC Coalition: New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI); ALIGN: the Alliance for a Greater New York; and Joint Council 16 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Transform Don’t Trash NYC is a growing coalition dedicated to transforming New York City’s commercial trash industry to reduce waste and pollution, foster clean and healthy communities for all New Yorkers, and create good jobs.